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Environment: Energy-saving mobility - helping to curb climate change.

SBB stands for environment-friendly mobility. People who travel by train and transport freight by rail are opting for the forms of mobility that do least damage to the environment and cause least climate change. SBB has launched a company-wide energy-saving programme to make further reductions in its energy consumption in the next few years. In individual segments, environmental management was professionalised during the year under review, and substantial progress was made with noise reduction. Diesel locomotives continued to be fitted with particle filters on a voluntary basis. SBB is a pioneer throughout Switzerland in the field of professional environmental construction supervision.

Rail travel – an active climate-protection measure.

The rail network transports passengers and freight with a low expenditure of energy. Thanks to its own hydroelectric plants, SBB is able to cover a large amount of its power consumption by means of renewable energy sources. SBB thus makes a significant contribution to the prevention of climate change and promotes efficient energy use. Switching to rail from other means of transport therefore makes an active contribution to reducing energy consumption, cutting CO₂ emissions and reducing air pollution with substances such as nitrous oxides and diesel particulates. Rail travel positively influences pollution control and helps protect the Earth's climate.

Despite its excellent climate footprint, SBB still produces greenhouse gases. Taking into account all indirect emissions, rail operations are responsible for some 63,000 tonnes of CO₂. This is caused primarily by the diesel-powered service vehicles required for shunting, local freight delivery and track maintenance. Almost 53,000 tonnes of CO₂ were emitted by heating systems in buildings in 2007, plus around 21,000 tonnes by energy consumption. Petrol and diesel consumption by permanent way vehicles generated a total of just under 9,000 tonnes of CO₂.

Energy use: still more efficient.

In 2007 SBB consumed an average of around 9.2 kWh of end-use energy to transport one passenger a hundred kilometres. This is equivalent to petrol consumption of 1.1 litres per 100 km. In freight traffic, SBB required an average of around 6.9 kWh of end-use energy to transport one tonne a hundred kilometres, i.e. the equivalent of 0.7 litres of diesel.

At 1,818 GWh, the energy consumed by SBB to power its own trains in Switzerland was slightly lower than in the previous year (1,827 GWh). Thanks to the increased demand and associated increase in capacity utilisation, Passenger Traffic was able to improve energy efficiency. Specific energy consumption by freight traffic in Switzerland remained fairly stable.

High level of in-company power generation. SBB obtains nearly all the power it needs from hydroelectric sources. 70 % of the energy consumed in 2007 by all users of traction current came from hydroelectric facilities run either solely or jointly by SBB. SBB met the remaining requirement through its holdings in French nuclear power stations and from purchases in the free market.

SBB will continue to expand its transport output in the next few years. More frequent services, higher train speeds, longer tunnels – all this will increase SBB's energy consumption, and so will an increase in the proportion of air-conditioned rolling stock.

New energy-saving programme launched. To combat this trend and make a contribution to the federal government's objectives for energy efficiency, SBB launched a company-wide energy-saving programme in 2007. It is hoped that savings totalling 10 % can be achieved by 2015. In preparation for this, SBB subjected the energy consumption of buildings, facilities and rail operations to a detailed analysis designed to identify areas in which consumption can be cut. Energy-saving train movements and operations management are therefore a key focus of this programme. At the same time, optimised use of motive power and energy-conservation measures in buildings are also planned.

Less noise.

Following the retrofitting of low-noise brakes to almost all passenger coaches two years ago, last year saw the percentage of low-noise vehicles rise in the freight sector too. Thanks to the noise-reducing retrofitting of 1,283 freight wagons and the replacement of old rolling stock, 50 % of the freight wagon fleet is now fitted with low-noise braking systems. This conversion project will be completed by 2009.

For a long time now, SBB has been campaigning nationally and internationally to have rolling stock retrofitted. In this context, the German Bundestag's decision to provide financial support for the noise reduction of rolling stock in the coming years carries great significance. This marks a major step towards an international noise-reduction campaign for freight wagons. A perceptible reduction in noise pollution is thus on the cards, especially for people living along transit corridors. Around 60 % of the freight traffic using Switzerland's transit routes is currently foreign, non-noise-reduced rolling stock.

The construction of noise barriers and noise-reducing structures proceeded largely on schedule in 2007. Noise-protection measures along the line between Visp and Brig, for example, were completed in time for the opening of the Lötschberg base tunnel. During the year under review, further equipment was installed at two stations, Zurich Airport and Zurich-Stadelhofen, to combat irksome rail/wheel squeal.

Procurement and the environment.

Last year SBB implemented a number of measures in the procurement field to protect the environment and improve sustainability. The use of creosote to impregnate wooden sleepers was reduced, for example. Only sleepers made of FSC, PEFC or Q-Label wood continue to be used. All new diesel-powered rail and road vehicles acquired are fitted with particle filters. A considerable proportion of the diesel-locomotive fleet has been fitted with these filters since 2005, and by 2010 much of the remaining fleet will be given the same treatment. In 2007 the working-clothes purchasing department joined the Business Social Compliance Initiative (BSCI) in the field of production ethics.

Professionalising the environmental organisation.

SBB Passenger Traffic's Operating business unit obtained ISO 14001 certification in 2007. This represents a significant milestone in the professionalisation of the environmental organisation. The benefits of the systematic environmental management system can already be seen in the preparatory work through the reduction in the variety and quantities of hazardous substances, and the reorganisation of the storage facilities where they are held. During the year under review other areas of the company began to set up environmental management systems and conducted the associated pre-audits.

In pursuit of further professionalisation, SBB's Rail Environment Center clarified the duties and responsibilities involved in environmental work within the company, thus creating the preconditions for the continued focused development of SBB's environmental advantages.